

It's Wanderers

FOR the first time since the 1950s, Wycombe Wanderers will be meeting professional opposition in the F.A. Cup when, on November 24, the Blues take on Football League, Fourth Division side Newport County in the first round proper (writes Stuart Earp).

Apart from Brian Clough's Brighton and Hove Albion, Wanderers could hardly have wished for a better draw. A home cup tie was long overdue and Wycombe officials were really enthusiastic about the game. Secretary Bert Crump felt the Blues could well be in with a good chance of victory on their own ground, while treasurer Roger Lee said, "It's marvellous. I think we can expect a full house for this game."

Newport's reaction was one of disappointment. Secretary K. Saunders told me: "Any away draw is disappointing for County. We are quite aware of Wycombe Wanderers, they have made quite a name for themselves in recent years."

County's fear of the visit to Wycombe is quite understandable when one looks at their away record in Division Four this term. In eight games they have yet to win away from home, although four matches have been drawn. Despite this, they are situated in mid-table with an overall record of: P 15, W 4, D 5, L 6, goals for 15, goals against 21 for 13 points.

LATEST TABLE FOOTBALL LEAGUE DIVISION IV

	HOME			Goals			AWAY			Goals			
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Peterboro	15	7	1	0	17	3	2	4	1	7	7	23	22
Colchester	15	6	2	0	18	5	3	4	0	1	6	3	22
Reading	15	4	2	1	10	5	3	3	4	0	4	1	20
Gillingham	16	4	2	1	19	7	3	3	3	2	12	9	19
Lincoln	15	4	1	1	12	7	3	2	2	8	6	19	19
Torquay	15	6	1	1	15	8	1	4	4	5	11	18	18
Bury	15	7	0	0	22	3	0	4	4	5	11	18	18
Mansfield	15	7	0	0	17	2	0	4	4	6	15	18	18
Exeter	15	4	2	1	10	3	4	0	4	7	10	18	18
Rotherham	16	4	3	0	11	4	1	3	4	13	11	15	15
Northampton	15	5	2	1	10	3	0	3	4	6	13	15	15
Cheltenham	15	4	2	3	13	10	2	2	3	7	11	15	15
Bradford City	16	2	5	1	8	7	2	2	4	6	10	15	15
Newport	15	4	1	2	10	6	0	4	4	8	15	13	13
Swansea	15	3	4	0	11	4	1	0	7	6	19	12	12
Doncaster	15	4	1	2	10	6	1	1	6	4	14	12	12
Stockport	15	4	3	1	15	6	0	1	6	3	19	12	12
Crewe	15	1	5	2	9	9	1	3	3	7	15	12	12
Wokington	15	3	3	0	2	10	14	1	1	5	6	13	12
Barnley	15	2	3	3	2	13	3	0	2	5	4	12	11
Brentford	15	3	2	3	12	6	1	0	6	5	16	10	10
Darlington	15	2	2	3	3	6	5	1	1	6	4	17	10
Hartlepool	15	2	2	3	3	6	9	0	3	5	6	14	9

v Newport County!

Their most recent result was a 3-0 reverse at Lincoln City on Saturday. At home they have met with more success, including a 2-0 victory over pacesetters Mansfield Town. Their home gates have averaged about 3,000, a drop of 2,000 on last season when they only narrowly missed out on promotion to Division Three. In fact, at the end of the season only 0.3 of a goal cost them a place in the Third Division after one of County's most successful seasons for years. In 71/72 they ended half-way up the table, but they had to apply for re-election the three previous seasons.

Newport's strength seems to be in defence and they will probably be well satisfied with a draw from their visit to Loakes Park. At the back is Welsh Under 23 international Steve Aizlewood, who interested Coventry City last term. John Macey, the goalkeeper, is currently in fine form despite Saturday's set-back. County's main problem is upfront, where there is a lack of goals.

They retained most of their players from last season and despite the addition of two well known professionals to their ranks, they have struggled to find their top form. The new players are Brian Godfrey, the former Aston Villa player, who cost County a record transfer fee of £10,000 from Bristol Rovers, and Harold Jarman, another Bristol player.

Managed by Billy Lucas, Newport reached the third round of the F.A. Cup last year, beating amateurs Alton Town 5-1 at home, and Torquay United 1-0 away before losing out 3-0 to Millwall at the Den.

In the League Cup they won their local derby with Swansea 3-0 at home after a replay, the first game ending 1-1. Their success was short-lived, however, when they lost to Ipswich 3-0 at home in the next round.

Newport's meeting with Wanderers will undoubtedly bring back bitter memories for them. It was only a couple of years ago when they were drawn against Southern League's Barnet in the Cup at Underhill. They crashed 5-1 on that day. Another Southern League club, Bath City, have also beaten them, as did Hereford United when they were semi-pro's.

Four County players have been capped by Wales, while Len Wearie holds the club record for most appearances with 524 games between 1955 and 1970.

Wycombe's delight at the draw is understandable. They were completely out of luck the last time they reached the first round proper in '70-71. Here they came up against local rivals Slough Town and after drawing 1-1 at Loakes Park, lost the replay 1-0 at the Dolphin Stadium. Although the combined gate for the two games was in excess of 12,000, the glamour of meeting a football league club was undoubtedly missing.

One has to delve back into the record books to find out when the Blues last met professional opposition. Many years ago, Wycombe met Gillingham in the first round proper but lost after a replay. In the early 50s Wanderers were drawn away to Watford but lost out 5-1 at Vicarage Road.

Again, in the 1950s, Wanderers reached round one where they were drawn, again away from home, to Northampton Town, then in the third division. In atrocious conditions, they went down 2-0 but many will remember Wycombe's ill fortune when only the mud prevented them equalising. A shot which beat the goalkeeper looked certain to find the net but it stuck in the mud inches from the line!

Walton and Hershman, who seem to have all the luck with cup draws, became the envy of the other clubs in the competition with the dream draw — at home to Brighton. No doubt Stompond Lane will be packed out on November 24.

FIRST ROUND DRAW

Crewe v Scarborough, Chesterfield v Barnsley, Bradford C. v Wokington, Runcorn or Bangor v Grimsby, Rochdale v South Shields, Stockport v Port Vale, Huddersfield v Wigan, Buxton or Alfreton v Blyth Spartans, Lancaster or Altrincham v Telford, Halifax v Friesley College, Tranmere v Bury, Wellington v Blackburn, Doncaster v Lincoln, Scunthorpe v Darlington, Wrexham v Shrewsbury, King's Lynn v Wimpole, Wycombe Wanderers v Newport, Walsall v Swansea, Hitchin Town v Guildford, Plymouth v Brentford, Yeovil or Weymouth v Macclesfield or Manthorpe v Northampton, Hereford v Torquay, Dagenham v Aldershot, Exeter v Stafford Rangers or Alvechurch, Cambridge United v Gillingham, Boston v Hayes or Enfield, Rovers, Barnet or Hendon v Leytonstone or Margate, Southend v Boreham Wood or Aveley, Walton and Hershman v Brighton.